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ABSTRACT

This guide is designed for those interested in organizing and/or participating in short-term study abroad programs. The following main topics are treated in detail: (1) the nature of the program, (2) the budget, (3) winning administrative approval for the program, (4) announcing the program, (5) orientation, (6) the program director, (7) the campus, the courses, and the itinerary, (8) guided tours, and (9) social events, recreation and sports. Ready-made study abroad programs and foreign study opportunities in the Western Hemisphere are briefly discussed. (PMP)

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A GUIDE TO ORGANIZING SHORT-TERM STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS

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FOREWORD

Much of the material contained in this report originally appeared in Paul T. Griffith, "Developing a Short-Term Overseas Travel-Study Program: Practical Considerations," in Wilga M. Rivers et al., eds., Changing Patterns in Foreign Language Programs: Report of the Illinois Conference on Foreign Languages in Junior and Community Colleges, 1972, Rowley, Massachusetts: Newbury House Publishers, Inc., 1972, pp. 306-328. The content of the article has been greatly augmented for publication here. We are grateful to the editors of Newbury House for their kind permission to reedit the original article for this report.

A GUIDE TO ORGANIZING

SHORT-TERM STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS

Introduction

Many North American colleges have initiated short-term overseas programs that combine study and travel as a profitable way to use the four- to eight-week recess during the middle of the school year. Teachers and students who might resent the intrusion of academic burdens into their summer vacations are often quite willing to devote their winter semester breaks to study abroad. Moreover, winter being the "off season" for European travel, the prices are somewhat lower and tourists less numerous at this time of year. For many teachers and students, of course, summer is no less appropriate a time for such a program. Indeed, if circumstances permitted, a portion of the academic year itself could be set aside for the trip abroad, the intensive pre-departure orientation, and the post-travel sessions for review and reinforcement of the overseas experience.

Short-term overseas programs are also extremely well suited to the needs of community colleges. The traditional "junior year abroad" in the context of the typical two-year institution would be unreasonably long, but the programs suggested here are entirely appropriate.

Trips abroad provide motivation through short-range goal achievement, and they offer authentic settings for developing language skills and cultural appreciations. Practical and satisfying experiences of this sort are particularly significant at a time when students tend to select their courses on the basis of "relevance," and the profession is deeply concerned about making learning purposeful. Finally, the publicity surrounding such a trip will help increase the general visibility of the foreign language department. In fact, if an overseas program with various interdisciplinary options were announced, it could serve to create among students enrolled in all departments an awareness of the potential benefits that knowing a foreign language could provide with respect to their careers or advanced training.

The Nature of the Program

The short-term overseas program can take several forms: (1) travel combined with study, (2) travel only (but firmly built on pre-departure study), and (3) an academic program based on a foreign campus, with occasional afternoon field trips and weekend excursions. There is one principle, however, that must guide the planning for all programs. While the creation of a well-organized learning experience (as opposed to superficial touring) should be paramount, a program of solid book work and term papers, no matter how well intentioned, completely defeats the original purpose of going abroad. Students who travel a great distance at considerable expense in order to observe and become involved should not be expected to spend long periods of time in class and in the library as if they were on their home campus.

The major goals of an overseas program are to develop a sensitivity to the foreign culture and to perfect the ability to converse easily with native speakers of the language. Educational travel and association with the local people, therefore, are learning situations at least as valuable as the classroom experiences, and time for these activities must be built into the schedule. Those who insist upon an overdose of formal instruction in these programs might consider that if instruction from native speakers were the only concern, it would be easier and less expensive to bring foreign teachers to the American campus.

One way to emphasize the importance of informal learning overseas is to evaluate it along with formal aspects of the program. Part of the student's grade might be based on the extent of his adaptation to cultural differences and the earnestness of his attempts to develop associations with his foreign peers.

Foreign study programs should welcome students from all disciplines, especially when language departments cannot produce sufficient numbers. Students of the arts will appreciate the exposure to museums, architecture, ballet, opera, concerts, theater, fashion houses, antique shops, folk festivals, local crafts, and cinema and television studios. Students of hotel management would benefit from visiting centers of tourism, the grand hotels, gourmet restaurants, and cooking schools. Business majors could attend international congresses, call on American firms operating abroad, and try to gain insights into the host country's approach to marketing, advertising, and personnel procedures. The techniques developed for individualizing instruction are applicable here.

The Budget

One of the first steps in organizing an overseas program is to establish a budget. Transportation, lodging, meals, tuition, salaries, office and printing expenses, and the program director's trip are obvious items. Tips, insurance, gifts, entertainment, inflation, and fluctuations in the value of the dollar are sometimes overlooked. If it is discovered after the students have enrolled that the initial price was too low, a cutback or a surcharge will be necessitated. Either measure may seriously undermine confidence in the program.

Funding. It would be unrealistic, especially in a time of financial cutbacks, to depend on funding from the sponsoring institution. Avenues for obtaining funds should nonetheless be explored, as an occasional scholarship or grant for curriculum development may still be available. The college might be willing at least to absorb office and printing expenses as well as the salary of the program director.

Air fare. International transportation is the greatest single item in the budget, but charter flights provide considerable economy without requiring any compromise in safety or comfort. While it would be difficult for many colleges to fill even the smallest charter plane (approximately 165 seats), a number of student travel organizations now sponsor charters for which almost any student group can qualify. If any but the best-known lines are flown, however, the company's safety record should be part of the routine literature for the program. The Civil Aeronautics Board in Washington, D. C., can furnish this information.

Surface transportation. One normally pays the same price to charter a motorcoach for a dozen passengers or three dozen. Thus, the more unoccupied seats there are, the higher the per-passenger cost. As touring coaches accommodate 35-45 persons, a chartered coach provides economical transportation for a group of 30-45. If the group exceeds 45 by only a few and a second bus is hired, a great number of empty seats will result, and the per capita cost will increase. If, however, 60 or more passengers are involved, the second coach can be hired with no serious loss of economy. If there are fewer than 25 in the group (except in Spain and the Alpine regions, where 16- and 18-passenger vehicles occasionally are available), rail transportation will prove more economical.

Even when it is not the most inexpensive transportation, the motorcoach may be preferable to the train because of its greater convenience. Passengers and baggage can be unloaded from a bus directly in front of hotels, obviating the confusion of the railroad station and the need for a costly taxi ride. The bus also allows for side trips and intermediate stops that would be impossible with the train, and itineraries should be planned to take advantage of the savings in time and money that such flexibility provides.

Lodging. In Europe, a minimally acceptable formula for lodging school groups is the two-star hotel with three persons to a room. Three-bedded rooms in three-star hotels would provide very comfortable accommodations. It is sufficient if half the rooms have bathing facilities, because all rooms are provided with hot and cold running water, and students in rooms without baths can share with those who have them or use the hotel's public showers. While it is inconvenient for six persons to share one bathroom, hotel costs would be tripled if, for example, rooms for two, each with a bath, were reserved for the group.

Lodging costs can be further reduced (and contacts with young people from other countries increased) by using youth hostels. However, there will not be a hostel everywhere the group is scheduled to go. Also, many hostels do not accept groups, or they limit the size of groups to eight or ten members. Other hostels restrict one's sojourn to one or two days, and there are often age and membership requirements. Still others have obligatory work projects or early curfews. All hostels are crowded during school vacations, and many are somewhat primitive. Yet a number of modern youth hostels have been built recently in Western Europe, and in many hostels, old and new, a guest is as free to come and go as he would be at an American YMCA. Given such variations, the program organizer will need to investigate all aspects of a youth hostel before including it in the itinerary. The offices of the American Youth Hostels in major U. S. cities can provide the details.

If the students attend classes in one place for a week or more, lodging in dormitories or private homes might be considered. Arranging for space in a boarding school or in university residence halls should be relatively easy, especially if the program's overseas representative is in the administration of the foreign institution. It is considerably more difficult to organize residence in private homes. First, several dozen families in the same town must be found who are willing to lodge and feed the students. Later, conflicts can arise regarding meals, curfews, personalities, or the use of the bathroom, necessitating mediation on the part of the group director. The unavoidable variations in comfort among lodgings will cause some group members to feel they have been cheated. Some will claim that they have been quartered not with families, but in rooming houses, while others complain that their foreign family adopts them so jealously that they are literally not free to go on field trips or to cultivate any friends outside the home circle. Finally, when the students are scattered throughout the town, the director may find that communicating with them is difficult and time-consuming. Lodging the group in private homes can be successful, but certainly the disadvantages should be considered before rejecting the consistency and convenience of dormitory living.

Whether lodging is to be in homes or in dormitories, an agreement in the form of a legal contract should be established between the parties as to the nature of the accommodations and the institution's or the family's responsibilities. This agreement would clarify such details as laundry, bathroom, telephone, and kitchen privileges, meal hours and menus, the curfew, if any, the dates of the sojourn, the price and form of payment for the accommodations, and the financial settlement in case of cancellation. The student, then, should be made fully aware of all conditions when he enters the program.

Meals. Continental breakfast is always included in the price of the room in two- and three-star European hotels. The participants should understand that eggs, bacon, cereal, or juice are not usually served for breakfast on the Continent, and persons ordering such items can expect to pay a supplement. It would be advisable to include one other meal per day (normally the evening meal) in the price of the program. When the group is on tour, the meal hour offers a regular time for providing information, distributing mail, and unobtrusively taking the roll. Lunch should be left open, except when touring, so that the students do not have to interrupt their activities to return to the hotel to eat. When on tour, lunch should be provided, so that the passengers do not lose time shopping for restaurants. A restaurant stop could be booked in advance for this purpose, but the students might enjoy a picnic if weather permits and if this solution is not overworked. Not only will they benefit from the experience of buying the necessary provisions, but three to five dollars per student is trimmed from the price of the program every time a restaurant stop is eliminated.

Discounts. The many discounts a student group can take advantage of, simply because they are students and a group, are too numerous to detail here. They are so interesting, however, that they definitely deserve the attention of the program organizer. There are group theater rates, university restaurants, free student admissions to museums, even considerations in shops and movies. As a rule, one should never buy entrance tickets of any kind, book passages, or reserve accommodations without first negotiating for a group rate. Although this largely Old World practice makes many Americans uneasy, there is no need to feel this way. It is usually sufficient to declare that one is the leader of a school group in order to obtain a discount. At national monuments, it is best to present an attestation from the consulate in your school's area or from the ministry of education. The students should be ready to show official identity cards from their home institution. On European railroads, a group reduction can amount to as much as forty percent. In tourist-class hotels, one room in fifteen is routinely complimentary.

Inflation. Since the cost of European travel fluctuates with the state of the world economy, the program director must take certain precautions. First, he should ask the agents to quote guaranteed prices whenever possible. Second, it should be stated in the

program literature that the organizers reserve the right to adjust the tour price if warranted by fluctuations in the economy or other unforeseen circumstances. Last, the director should add an inflation margin of about five percent to the budget. It is far better to quote a higher figure and then lower the price, if the need arises, than be forced to curtail the program or ask for more money later.

Tips. It should be distinctly indicated whether tips for chambermaids, drivers, porters, waiters, and guides have been included in the quotations furnished by the contractors. Even if these gratuities have been included in principle, the personnel may still expect something in addition. A clear understanding must be reached with the agent concerning every instance where tipping is involved.

Gifts and entertainment. It is more frequently appropriate in Europe than in America to treat personal and business acquaintances to coffee, cocktails, and small gifts. If the facilities of foreign campuses or homes are used, a reception or a dinner may even be indicated. The persons exercising budgetary control must recognize these items as legitimate operating expenses.

Liability insurance. The school attorney should investigate the matter of liability and recommend an insurance program if the sponsoring institution's policy does not provide adequate coverage. In addition to insurance, he will probably recommend a carefully worded release form. The price of the program must reflect these insurance costs.

Student baggage and medical insurance. It is not practical for the school to sponsor a group health or baggage insurance program. Most participants are already covered by student insurance plans, family health and accident policies, and household policies for baggage and personal effects. In the rare instance in which this is not the case, it would be preferable for the student to deal with an insurance agent on an individual basis, as the premium for a group policy for the handful of exceptions would prove much too costly. Naturally, the group insurance could be made compulsory, but that would seem a pointless duplication where existing insurance is adequate. The students or their parents should check to see that coverage does in fact apply for the countries concerned, as some policies contain geographical restrictions.

Winning Administrative Approval

School administrators ask very penetrating questions about the legal aspects of foreign travel, the academic worth of the program, its cost to the college and to the students involved, and the effect the program will have upon the image of the sponsoring institution. It is their responsibility to be concerned about such matters, and they deserve straightforward answers to these entirely legitimate questions.

One needs first to formulate a list of administrative requirements for program approval and then work at meeting these requirements. The administration will no doubt ask for a detailed itinerary, a description of the course work, an accurate statement of cost, and a rationale for offering the course.

Considering the amount of work involved for the program organizer, particularly when correspondence with foreign schools and travel services is anticipated, a period of six to nine months is not too long to allow for preparations of this kind. Another semester or two will be required to recruit the participants.

Obtaining administrative approval is an essential first step, because without it no program can exist. Moreover, a convincing presentation of the case may win influential converts who can be helpful in making the trip a success.

Announcing the Program

When the program is announced, all conditions should be stated definitively and in writing to eliminate any future misunderstandings. All these matters should be clearly delineated and understood by all: the price of the program and what this fee includes and does not include, any standards of conduct that will be enforced, who can be accepted into the program and on what conditions one can be separated from it, and the refund policy. One should be specific. Which meals are included and which are at the expense of the student? How many baths are allowed per week where the student will be lodged? How much pocket money is essential? What expenses will this money cover and what will it not cover? Deadlines and payment due dates should be set and the schedules of orientation sessions published. Some sort of agreement of participation, a form setting forth program conditions and signed by the student--and by his parents if he is legally a minor--is in fact desirable.

Orientation

Prior to the trip, the students should have an opportunity to acquire an appropriate background in the culture of the countries to be visited. This can be achieved effectively through group discussions based on a reading list that covers such areas as art, history, cuisine, architecture, government, and economics. Such information is needed from the moment of arrival overseas, so it must be obtained either in specific orientation sessions or in regular classes before the departure. The time abroad is too brief and too costly to spend acquiring background that can be readily established at home.

The teacher should not overlook the subtle cultural differences, customs, practices, and attitudes that are potential sources of embarrassment or difficulty for the uninitiated. The simple knowledge that the French train conductor may not control tickets during the journey, but that the passenger must turn in his ticket to get out of the station will prove tremendously useful, to give one example.

Also part of the orientation process is the distribution of a clothing list and instructions for procuring travel documents. The clothing list might be more readily acceptable if it were drawn up by the students themselves on the basis of discussions with fellow-students and young faculty members who have recently returned from abroad.

The orientation also provides an opportunity for organizing group travel. Much time and energy can be saved if everyone knows what to expect, step by step, in airports, at customs, and in hotels. One should not wait to deliver a lecture on punctuality until one or two late-risers have delayed a bus full of people. It is during the orientation that understandings should be reached on the responsibilities the individuals have to other members of the group.

The Program Director

A major consideration is the choice of a program director. This versatile individual serves as a teacher, administrator, psychologist, expert in tourism, disciplinarian, counselor, businessman, diplomat, and interpreter of languages and cultures. He can expect to work ten to twelve hours a day conducting tours, briefings, and counseling sessions, establishing social contacts for his students, planning activities, and attending to logistical problems occasioned by illness, unfavorable weather, or hotel cancellations. Any candidate for this position who focuses his inquiries upon the amount of personal time he will have is unlikely to be an appropriate choice.

The program director will find that handling recruitment, orientation, correspondence, and budget is sufficient work for him. He will be wise to delegate other tasks--lodging, meals, teachers, classrooms, transportation, guides--to other individuals or agencies. If the program is to be basically an educational tour (as opposed to course work), the arrangements can be made through any reputable agency with experience in student travel. The cost is no higher when bookings are made through an agent, whereas the convenience is considerable.

If classroom space, native teachers, dormitories, or private homes are required, the matter had best be delegated to a person--probably a teacher--who lives in the town where the overseas campus is

to be located. This individual would inspect homes, interview prospective teachers, negotiate for classroom and dormitory space, and deal with the local travel services. Naturally, this representative should be paid for his work. It is a good practice to keep the cultural attaché informed of the project. As the official representative of his country's schools and cultural institutions, the attaché can offer much valuable advice, and he can often provide passes and letters of introduction to places the ordinary tourist never has the opportunity to visit.

There is little risk in accepting hotel and restaurant accommodations that cannot be examined in advance. European hotels and restaurants are classified by the respective ministries of tourism, and the quality of each category is fairly consistent from town to town, although the classifications do differ from one country to another. If, however, dormitory accommodations or private homes are to be used, the facilities must be inspected by a representative who has the necessary contacts and who understands precisely what the program director expects. (The same principle applies if native instructors are to be employed.) It would be virtually impossible for the director to write for bids to dozens of hotels, bus companies, and restaurants, even if he knew the addresses. Hence, an agent should be retained.

When the tasks of recruiting a foreign staff and visiting scores of homes are added, it becomes even more apparent why it is preferable to engage someone in the country to coordinate the entire overseas operation, at least during the organizational year. Under normal circumstances, a period of six to nine months would be required to put the overseas portion together. Even if money and time were available for the program director to make an exploratory trip abroad, he would have time to do no more than check the arrangements that the local representative had already made.

The Campus, the Courses, and the Itinerary

Where the group will go, what they will see, and what they will study are determined by the students' background and goals, the organizer's expectations, and the limitations of time and money. However, some general guidelines can be provided.

If the program is basically an educational tour, the participants need some background in the history, architecture, art, geography, literature, and sociology of the places they will visit. Whether the itinerary is dictated by courses already in existence or whether special orientation courses are to be developed must be decided by the staff.

If course work will play a part in the overseas portion of the program, it must be kept in mind that one learns best what one can immediately put into practice. Language classes should therefore concentrate on conversational situations that the students will readily encounter, and much of the time scheduled for cultural courses should be devoted to acquiring background for the field trips.

If a language program is the basic aim, the campus should be located in a spot where the opportunity to speak English is minimal. Unfortunately, this criterion automatically eliminates Paris, Rome, the Costa del Sol, the French and Italian Rivieras, and many large German cities. Yet, although the major population centers (with the exception of Madrid, Lisbon, and the Soviet cities) are thus rejected, a place must be found where entertainment and recreational facilities are available. The town that "rolls up the sidewalks" at ten o'clock is not conducive to good group morale; moreover, such a place provides few opportunities for mixing with the local people. There should be cinemas, participant and spectator sports, museums, interesting cafés, and active youth clubs. There should also be opportunities for excursions to castles, woods, beaches, farms, islands, picturesque villages and historical sites. And there should be a good proportion of young people in the population. If classrooms are required, the choice is further limited to a town with a university or boarding school.

During the spring and summer, resort areas that attract relatively few English-speaking tourists come the closest to fulfilling these ideals. Examples are few, and the supply is diminishing. The seaside towns of Brittany and Normandy, the southern Adriatic shores of Italy, and the spas and beaches of Lower Saxony might be considered. While prejudice against the idiom of these areas might have been relevant a generation ago, in this day of mass media one can count on all but the most isolated inhabitants to set a worthy example for the foreign language student.

If the program is to take place during the summer months, the director may find it more feasible to enroll the students in a summer school already organized by a European university in a town that more or less meets the above requirements than to develop a program from the ground up, particularly in the pilot year. A directory of such schools can be obtained from the respective foreign consulates. The consul or cultural attaché himself will no doubt offer his services as an intermediary. Using an established summer school will not only entail much less work than setting up a new program, but it will probably be less costly as well. By joining an existing program, one naturally loses the advantages of exclusivity; but if the group is large enough, the European director might be persuaded to establish special courses.

Guided Tours

Scorn and ridicule are often heaped upon group touring. Skeptics should consider, however, the prospect of completely unstructured sightseeing: the students arrive in a strange town, lose a great deal of time inquiring what there is to see and how to get there, waste more time experimenting with public transportation, spend money on taxis, use valuable minutes standing in line for tickets, and finally only half-understand the little they have time left to see.

A touring coach with a professional guide eliminates this waste, provides a meaningful first visit, and furnishes excellent orientation for in-depth enjoyment on an individual basis during free time. It is important that the guide be told that the students have already studied the places to which he is taking them, and that they expect to return later in the week. Typically, the guide will be pleased to know that he has such a receptive audience and will inspire enthusiasm for return visits. The participants in turn should understand that such orientation tours are by nature cursory and somewhat rushed. They do provide background for, but they seldom replace, the more leisurely return visits for which time must be built into the program.

Using this plan, a half-day of guided sightseeing in any major city would not be excessive. Rome, in fact, deserves two half-days. In most cities, half a day would give only time enough to see what the major landmarks were and how to reach them by public transportation; it would not leave time to go inside.

Whether guided visits of the interiors are added will depend on the particular interests of the group. Whether a special guide is hired for these tours will depend on the capabilities of the program staff and on the strength of the local guide union. A teacher is always permitted to serve as guide to his own students aboard the motorcoach and in the street, but it will often be obligatory to engage an official guide when a visit is desired inside museums, cathedrals, galleries, castles, and their grounds. Before the program director addresses his students as a group in such places, he should inquire about the policy; otherwise he risks an embarrassing reprimand from the guard or a union representative.

Any travel agency in Europe can provide a guide--English-speaking if desired--licensed by the ministry of tourism. Some of these guides are excellent, but others may require some prompting in the form of a few pointed factual questions from the group members. Although the fee for the guide is included in the price of the ticket when his services are mandatory, it is customary to hand him a small tip at the end of the visit.

Before booking a tour to an outlying area, one should investigate the feasibility of going there by public transportation. Rome and

Ostia are linked by frequent rail service, Versailles can be reached by commuter train from Paris, and a tramway connects downtown Munich to Nyphenburg, to cite a few examples. Public transportation is more reasonable than a chartered bus in such cases, and one can be more independent about departure times. Also not to be overlooked is the fact that a trip on the streetcar or the commuter train provides interesting cultural exposure for the students.

People-to-People

Social events, recreation, and sports are essential outlets and morale-builders, and they deserve a place in the program for these reasons alone. They are, moreover, educational, for what is a volleyball game for a language student when all his teammates are Italian, but an unsurpassed lesson in conversational Italian?

Students want desperately to meet and talk with their foreign counterparts. They most often give as a major reason for enrolling in the program their desire to improve their oral facility in the language and their understanding of people. Yet many programs are faulted for their failure to provide opportunities for "practicing on the natives." The students were surrounded by Frenchmen, yet their greatest experience was buying a chocolate éclair "all in French." Or they traveled to Salzburg, only to spend the summer speaking pidgin German to each other. The problem is that the planners of such programs felt it was sufficient to lead a horse to water. Obviously, even complete immersion was not enough!

In view of the structure and span of the short-term group trip, interpersonal contacts need to be planned as carefully as the itinerary and the classroom instruction. It should be noted that a twenty-year-old's idea of "meeting the people" is not to shake hands in a reception line with the mayor of Salamanca. The sort of linguistic and social experience the student needs and craves is an evening spent with Spanish friends of his own age, sipping tinto, swapping stories, and singing folksongs to the accompaniment of a guitar.

Preventing isolation from the natives requires the program director to actively nurture social contacts for his students. The students, for their part, must understand that if they wait for the local people to seek them out, they may wait forever. While a foreigner on a small American campus is still something of a novelty, the European has grown blasé about Americans. Students must resign themselves to shunning the company of other Americans, including members of their own group, and plunging instead into activities that will put them in touch with the local young people. Above all, the American should realize that he

must make himself acceptable to his European counterparts by dressing and behaving in a manner that does not offend local practices and mores.

The student can make acquaintances with ease by enrolling in a sailing school, joining a mountain-climbing club, or cultivating an interest in a folklore society or camera club, to name but a few possibilities. The program director should seek out places where young people congregate. A call at the neighborhood rectory will provide information on the local youth organizations. The members of these clubs can then be invited to songfests and bike hikes. They and their friends can fill up the empty seats on the excursion buses. The expense of furnishing a few extra box lunches is certainly justifiable, as the gesture will be reciprocated in the form of invitations and other gratifying contacts.

Ready-Made Programs: A Caveat

It may be that an instructor will counsel his students to enroll in one of the ready-made programs. A number of these programs now cultivate the four-year and community college market. It would be inappropriate to list them here, even if there were room, but any foreign language teacher can draw up a fairly sizable list simply by referring to the brochures he receives through the mail in any given semester.

Some of these "institutes," "programs," and "academies" are merely travel agencies with a gimmick. Others are professional educational programs conducted by educators or sponsored by schools or teachers' associations. Naturally, there are variations in between. None of these programs should be faulted solely on the basis of sponsorship, for there are good and bad ones of every type. Many travel agencies do an excellent job, even though one might sometimes resent their masquerading as educational organizations. On the other hand, the fact that a program is sponsored by a school does not guarantee it is educationally sound.

Each program must be judged on its own merits. The National Council of State Supervisors of Foreign Languages has published guidelines for evaluating these programs, and the Institute of International Education keeps extensive files on most of them. Still, it is difficult to make judgments from the information in a commercial brochure. One can only advise caution, pointing out that if the group leader or a member of the board of directors is "Mr. Z from ABC High School," this does not necessarily mean that ABC High endorses the program; and if an overseas school claims to be "recognized by the X Ministry of Education," this does not necessarily indicate that the X Minister of Education thinks their program is of value. It only means that the institution has met certain minimum physical and staffing requirements.

Foreign Study in the Western Hemisphere

French and Spanish program planners have economical alternatives not available to colleagues in the other languages, namely, the linguistically foreign cultures in North America. Whether preference or financial considerations prompt the choice of Mexico, Haiti, or Quebec, almost all that has been said about Europe is applicable to these areas as well. Trips to South America are not more economical to operate than programs in Spain and Portugal because of the higher cost of living in the Americas, the lower airfares to Iberia, and the relative infrequency of student charters to Latin America.

In Conclusion

As the trend toward individualized instruction continues to grow in the secondary schools, colleges and universities will be receiving increasing numbers of students whose learning styles are heavily oriented toward the mini-course, special projects, and short-range goal realization--students who seek immediate application of what they are learning. The study abroad program of short duration offers an ideal way in which to meet the needs of such students, whether they are foreign language majors or non-majors whose career plans or personal interests orient them toward language study.

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